

MEMORANDUM FOR: All National Ocean Service Employees

FROM: Alan Neuschatz /s/  
Associate Assistant Administrator for Management

SUBJECT: Cell Phone Use Policy

On September 9, 2002, I sent out an All Hands e-mail indicating that the Office of Inspector General is investigating NOAA-wide cell phone usage. I want to reinforce the NOAA Telecommunication Management-Telephone Use Policy (effective 7/22/99) policy which states that cell phones are to be used for government business only when conducting business outside the office (including when on travel status) and/or outside a government facility. For further details, please visit the following website:  
<http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~nao/212-10a.htm>

Per that policy, employees should be particularly diligent and use cell phones only when required to do so for official business and when the calls are in the best interest of the Government. In the rare instances when non-official use is necessary, some examples of appropriate calls that are in the best interest of the Government include the following:

1. calls to alert household members about working late or other schedule changes;
2. calls to make alternative child care arrangements;
3. calls to talk with doctors, hospital staff, or day care providers;
4. calls to determine the safety of family or household members, particularly in an emergency;
5. calls to make funeral arrangements;
6. calls to reach government agencies (state, local, etc.) that can only be contacted during work hours; and
7. calls to make emergency repairs to vehicles or residences, etc.

Since the government also pays for incoming calls, those of a personal nature should be minimal and related to emergencies. Management will determine whether personal calls are reasonable and in the best interest of the government based on employees' work schedule, co-worker needs, office work demands, etc. While in the office, land lines remain the most cost efficient and effective means of communication. Cell phones should not be substituted for such lines in government offices such as the Silver Spring

campus, Charleston, Norfolk and Seattle, OPM training centers or any training offered at government facilities.

NOS Information Technology (IT) support activities require the use of cell phones in order to quickly respond to their clients' needs. Therefore, NOS systems administrators, IT technical and Help desk support staffs are authorized to use their cell phones in NOAA facilities.

Unless there are unusual extenuating circumstances, personal phone calls while on travel should not exceed \$6.00 for domestic travel and \$12.00 for foreign travel per day. Managers should determine the least cost method of making such calls for their employees. For example, if making such calls via the cell phone is more expensive than using a Federal calling card (or a toll-free number, if provided), then the latter should be used. Managers will also examine all cell phone plans to ensure that they are the most cost effective to support operational needs and that the cell minute plans are at the appropriate level. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that cell phone activities of their employees are in the best interest of the Government, and recovering costs or taking disciplinary action when cell phone abuse occurs.

I appreciate your appropriate use of this and all other government property that is paid for by the U.S. taxpayers. If you have any questions, please contact your direct supervisor.

cc: N - Jamie Hawkins  
N - Ted Lillestolen